
BUDGET UNIT BRIEF – FY 2023

Fiscal Services Division

July 1, 2022



Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515.281.3566

Iowa Civil Rights Commission

Purpose and History

The Iowa Civil Rights Commission is the agency charged with enforcing Iowa's Civil Rights Act. Under contracts with the federal government, the Commission is also required to assist in enforcement of housing and employment discrimination laws. The Act prohibits discrimination in the areas of employment, housing, credit, public accommodation, and education. Discrimination based on race, color, creed, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, physical disability, mental disability, retaliation (for filing a discrimination complaint), age (in employment and credit only), familial status (in housing and credit only), and marital status (in credit only) is prohibited. The statute of limitations for filing a complaint with the Iowa Civil Rights Commission is 300 days from the date of the last discriminatory act.

The purpose of the Iowa Civil Rights Commission is to function as a neutral, fact-finding administrative agency that enforces Iowa's Civil Rights Act of 1965. The Commission addresses discrimination by: providing case resolution through intake, screening, mediation, investigation, conciliation, and public hearings, conducting state-wide public education and training programs to prevent and respond to discrimination, and performing tests to determine the existence or extent of discrimination in Iowa.

Employment is the largest area of complaints filed, followed by housing and accommodation. Retaliation, disability, race, and sex are the most frequently named bases (personal characteristics) for discrimination in non-housing cases. Disability and race are the most frequently named bases for discrimination in housing.

In regard to housing, testing by the Commission helps to ensure that Iowa landlords are aware of their rights and responsibilities under fair housing laws. Housing cases are primarily resolved through settlements that include training of the landlords and an end to the discriminatory policy.

Funding

Funding for the Iowa Civil Rights Commission varies annually. It is approximately 50.0% State General Fund appropriation and 50.0% federal funds. The Commission contracts with the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Both contracts have training and maintenance of effort requirements. The EEOC's maintenance of effort requirement is to process between 50 and 100 employment cases per year. The Iowa Civil Rights Commission has averaged in excess of 1,500 cases per year for the last several years. The HUD's maintenance of effort requirement is to process approximately 10 to 20 cases per year. The Iowa

More Information

Iowa Civil Rights Commission: icrc.iowa.gov

Iowa Civil Rights Commission – 2020 Annual Report: icrc.iowa.gov/document/2020-annual-report

LSA Staff Contact: Evan Johnson (515.281.6301) evan.johnson@legis.iowa.gov

Civil Rights Commission has averaged more than 100 housing cases per year for the last several years. The Iowa Civil Rights Commission is usually one of the highest performing Fair Housing Partners in the HUD's Region VII.

The Iowa Civil Rights Commission employs volunteer attorneys statewide to conduct mediation. More than 20 Iowa lawyers volunteer to help the Commission resolve complaints through alternative dispute resolution.

Local Commissions

The Iowa Civil Rights Commission partners with local human and civil rights commissions to provide education, shared office space for mediation of cases, the use of volunteers, and website links. Complaints are cross-filed between the State and local agencies, and the Commission has contracts with local agencies to process and investigate cases. The Commission's data system ensures cases that are cross-filed at the federal, State, and local level are investigated by only one agency.

Related Statutes and Administrative Rules

Iowa Code chapters [216](#), [729](#), and [729A](#)
Iowa Administrative Code [161](#)

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